

HANDES AMSORYA
ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR ARMENISCHE PHILOLOGIE

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CASPIANE: AN HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

Eastern Armenia traditionally consisted of three separate *ašxarhk'*: Arc'ax, Utik', and P'aytakaran¹. Of these, two are attested by classical authors from an early period: Utik' or *Otene* and P'aytakaran or *Caspiane* (from its original Armenian name *Kaspk'*). Arc'ax, on the other hand, is not known to any classical author and is first mentioned in the pages of Faustus of Buzanda in connection with its defection from the Armenian kingdom in the period 363—387². In actuality, eastern Armenia consisted of five geopolitical units: *Kaspk'*, Utik', Golt', Gardman, and Šakašēn, the last two only later included in greater Utik', while Arc'ax had been, most likely, a part of Siwnik' until the fourth century and only included Golt'.

The largest of these borderlands and one of the very largest territories in Arsacid Armenia was *Kaspk'*, or *Caspiane*, which, at the same time, was the most easterly and probably the least Armenian of its traditional lands. The purpose of this study is to examine this region in detail, to determine its frontiers, its subdivisions and its ethnic character, and to trace the history of its connection with Armenia and the eventual passing of it from Armenian control. If much that appears here may be found elsewhere, its inclusion is necessary for an understanding of the whole question which has not previously been examined in this detail.

¹ Cf. the *Ašxarhec'oyc'* (hereinafter: ASX), an anonymous Armenian geographical text written in the early seventh century; short recension in A. Abrahamean, *Anania Širakac'u Matenagrut'wn* (Erevan, 1944); long recension, A. Soukry, *Géographie de Moïse de Chorène d'après Ptolémée* (Venice, 1881). The term *ašxarh* is usually translated "province" but more accurately as "land".

² P'awstos Biwzandac'woy *Patmut'wn Hayoc'* (Venice, 1933), V, XIII.

Location

The general location of Caspiane is not difficult to determine. The long recension of the ASX, in its introduction to the section dealing with Armenia, describes P'aytakaran (*Caspiane*) as the land "by the city of P'aytakaran extending along the Caspian shore and to the mouth of the Arax" (*ašxarh P'aytakaran K'alak'ov or a' ezerbn Kaspic' i muts Erasxay*)³. The introduction to the Armenian section in the short recension simply refers to P'aytakaran, the region, with no further qualifications but, in the text itself, where P'aytakaran is missing in the long recension, the short one describes the region as lying "east of Utik' along the Arax" (*yelic' kay Utwoy a' Erasxaw*)⁴. Neither of these descriptions is very specific but from what we can gather from other sources, the sense of them is that Caspiane lay along both sides of the Arax but east of Utik' and, since there wasn't much left of the course of the Arax between Utik' and where the Arax joined the Kur, the bulk of the region must have lain south of the river⁵.

³ Ed. Soukry p. 29 of the Armenian text. In his translation (p. 40) Soukry has erred in the interpretation of this passage rendering it as "...*Paidagaran au bord de la mer Caspienne, à l'ouest du fleuve d'Araxe*".

⁴ Ed. Abrahamean, p. 350.

⁵ That the name P'aytakaran was originally that of the city only and was not applied to the province of Caspiane until much later is clear from the sources. No classical author prior to the compiler of the ASX (early seventh century) uses P'aytakaran in any sense and Armenian authors prior to the seventh century know it only as a city in Caspian territory. Thus Agathangelos (*Patmut'wn Hayoc'*, Tiflis, 1914), speaking of St. Gregory's activities in the early fourth century, states that "he came to the territory of the Caspians to the city of P'aytakaran of the Armenians", while Stephan Asotik

Can we identify the location of Caspiane a little more precisely than this? Obviously, the Caspian Sea bounded it on the east, probably from the joint mouth of the Kur-Arax to a point somewhere near the modern port of Akstafa, after which the Talysh Mountains would form a natural frontier on the south. This range consists of a hemicycle of mountains extending west from the coast to Mt. Yaştasar (now the *Kūh e Geyshtasar*), after which the Karadagh range forms a more or less natural frontier on the west extending northwards back to the Arax⁶. The location of the famous Caspian Gates in the Talysh Mountains, after which the mountains rapidly descend to the Caspian lowlands, confirms our opinion that this range was indeed the southern frontier of Caspiane and hence, of Arsacid Armenia. The area thus enclosed is estimated by Eremean to have included some 21,000 sq. kms.

Physical Description

Apart from the Talysh Mountains, Caspiane was almost completely low-lying, nearly half of it falling below sea level and

of Tarawan, writing in the early eleventh century but referring to the same events, states that "he came to P'aytakaran in the land of the Caspians" (cited by H. Hübschmann *Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen*, Strassburg, 1904, p. 269). Lewond Erec', writing in the eight century, also cites P'aytakaran as the name of a district extending north of the Arax (Hübschmann, *ibid.*, 268, n. 1), as it appears in the ASX.

⁶ S. T. Eremean, *Hayastana ast Ašxarha-c'oyc'-i* (Erevan, 1963) p. 58 and map. Now, along the south, this range of mountains is broken by a wide gap through which flows the River Gar-rah (now the Qareh-su) running north to join the Arax. South of this gap the two arms of the Gar-rah each form a wide valley south of which lie the much more impressive Sabalan range. There is no reason, however, to believe that the Armenian possessions extended as far south as these valleys, and Eremean regards these as the land of the *Katišk'* (Cadusians), who we know were not included in Armenia. (Pliny [XI, xviii, 48]) tells us that the Cadusians were the same as the Gelae, whom we know dwelled on the coast, but Armenian authors (e. g. Elise, VI) clearly distinguish between the *Katišk'* and the *Gelk'* as does Strabo (XI, vii, 1; XI, viii, 1).

thus constituting a portion of the Caspian basin. Although its climate was hot and arid, it was well watered by a number of southern tributaries of the Arax. Most of these, except for the Gař-rah, where very small but from an early period canals and levees were constructed for purposes of irrigating much of the region and traces of these are still to be found in the southeastern portion of the Azerbaidžanian SSR⁷. Caspiane was rich in cotton and barley⁸, of which the latter grew wild. Strabo speaks of the crops of neighboring Albania also growing with little or no attention⁹.

We know little of the road system in Caspiane but, considering the connection between Albania and Iran, there must have been a main road, not referred to in ancient authors, linking Kabalaka (Kabalak), the early capital of Albania, with the successive Iranian empires. Given the location of Kabalaka on the southern slopes of the Caucasus, almost exactly due north of P'aytakaran city, this route must have run south to the Kur, across the river to the latter city, then across the Arax to Vardanakert and, finally, up the Gař-rah (Qareh-su) to Ardebil and Ecbatana in Media. We may also postulate a coastal road along the Caspian shore running north to the oil-rich Apsheron Peninsula and on the litoral pass at Derbent, but nothing is known of it.

Ethnic Composition

The Caspians appear from early times as a people living on both sides of the Caspian Sea and it is often unclear whether the sources refer to a distinct people by that name or whether "Caspian" is a generic term used to refer to the various tribes who lived along the Caspian coast¹⁰. In all probability,

⁷ T. X. Hakobean, *Hayastani Patmakan ašxarhagrut'yun* (Erevan, 1968), p. 250.

⁸ ASX, ed. Abrahamean, p. 350.

⁹ Strabo, *Geography*, Loeb Class. Lib., XI, 4. 3.

¹⁰ The early history of Caspiane is unknown. Herzfeld offered the theory that the ancient Lullubi, Gutti, Urartians and Elamites were all part of one ethnic and linguistic group which he called *Kassi* (Caspians) holding that

there actually was once such a people as the Caspians. Their name, which contains the K-S root so widespread in Caucasia and, in fact, found in the name Caucasus itself (Koh-Kas), makes it possible that they represent an offshoot of the Kashka or Colchians and were thus one of the proto-caucasian elements who, further west, went into makeup of the Georgian people¹¹. Strabo specifically addresses himself to the question of the Caspians stating that the sea was named after them but that by his time they had disappeared¹². Four hundred years later, however, the Armenian sources speak of the Caspians as if they still existed¹³. The only explanation for this is that the Caspians, having given their name to the sea, had disappeared by the first century A. D., after which the name of the sea, or, more likely, the name of their former territory, Caspiane, gave its name to the later inhabitants of the region. These would be a hodgepodge of Albanians, Cadusians, Amardians, Atropatenean Medes, and other nomadic or semi-nomadic Iranian tribes. The moslem Talysh, and Iranian enclave on the Caspian coast in what is now a sea of Azeri Turks, must represent the remnants of the original inhabitants¹⁴. It would seem that this remote region was scarcely armenized at all although there

the *Kossai* and *Kissi* of Greek sources (the Kassites), all terms referring to these people were derived from the root *kas with -p as the plural ending. While admitting this possibility and regarding it as a tempting one, Frye doubted it on the grounds that there was no evidence that he Elamite plural -p was used in such supposedly related languages as Hurrian and Urartian, a use he felt would be necessary for the formation of the name "Caspian" (R. M. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia*, New York, 1963, p. 87).

¹¹ Cf. C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Washington, 1963), p. 55.

¹² Strabo, XI, iv, 5.

¹³ Agathangelos I; FB, V, 14.

¹⁴ The Talysh call themselves *Tolyshon* and speak an Iranian tongue related to Kurdish. There were some 89,398 Talysh in Soviet Azerbaijan in 1931 and an estimated 50,000 of them in Iran in 1959. Cf. Greiger et al., *Peoples and Languages of the Caucasus* (The Hague, 1959), p. 48. There must be a total of some 150,000 Talysh today.

were undoubtedly Armenian garrisons and civil servants in the area while it was a part of the Armenian kingdom¹⁵. Most of the districts of P'aytakaran, as cited in the ASX, bear Iranian names and its population, as we have seen, must have been largely Iranian in composition. The name of one district, *Hani*, suggests an Aianian enclave¹⁶, however, while still later, the Balasjians appeared in the region from north of the Caucasus. It is interesting that by the early seventeenth century Caspiane had come to be called P'aytakaran after a city which stood north of the Arax and, hence, presumably, outside of the original Caspiane. This is a problem to which we shall return later.

The name P'aytakaran has never been satisfactorily explained. *P'ayt* means "wood" in Armenian and *p'aytak* suggests a diminutive form with the locative suffix -aran and so could mean "wooded place" but this is not certain and the name may well be of non-Armenian origin¹⁷. Besides P'aytakaran, Caspiane had yet another name, *Balasakan*, which, while unrelated to P'aytakaran, is probably connected to *Baylakan* the Arab name for P'aytakaran city. Now the Balasjians (Arm.: *Balasčik'*) were a Caucasian mountain people known from the fourth century when they appeared among the host of savage mountain tribes gathered by Sanatruk Aršakuni for his invasion of Armenia¹⁸. These Balasjians were conceivably related to the Bala or Pala people of Assyrian records, who have left their name strewn across Armenia from west to east (*Palnatun*, *Balahovit*, and *Palunik'* west of Tarawn; *Palunik'* near Van, *Balk'* in Siwnik', etc.). Already in Koriwn, a century after Sanatruk's time, we hear of a region called *Balasakan* in connection with St. Mesrob's preaching in Albania,

¹⁵ Hakobean, 250.

¹⁶ N. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, Engl. transl. by Nina Garsoian (Lisbon, 1970), p. 324.

¹⁷ H. Hübschmann (*Ortsnamen*, p. 270) suggests a reading from *p'ait* 'wood' and *karan* 'seam' but also suggests that the name may be of local, i. e., Caspian, origin.

¹⁸ FB, III, vii.

while Zacharias of Mitylene¹⁹, writing in the mid-sixth century, places the land of Bazgun (which Adontz reads as *Ba(ra)zgan*)²⁰ between "the Caspian Gates, the (Caspian) sea and the Gate of the Huns", i. e., on both sides of the Kur along the Caspian Sea²¹.

History

The early history of Caspiane and the Caspians is almost completely unknown. They originally lived north of the Arax, as we should expect of relatives of the Colchians, and Frye considered both them and the Cadusians to have lived outside the Median Empire (585—550 B. C.)²². Herodotus places Caspians in both the eleventh satrapy of the Achaemenian Empire (along with the Pausicae, Pantimathi, and Daritai) and in the fifteenth (with the Sacae or Scythians)²³. Obviously, in both cases, we are dealing with tribes to the east of the Caspian. The later Caspiane appears to have been considered a part of Media and the reference in Strabo to the effect that Atropates, satrap of Media, prevented the Seleucids from

acquiring the northern part of the Media—Media Minor—suggests that the latter was the earliest name for the region²⁴. The term, Media Minor, moreover, suggests an area distinctly smaller than the rest of the country and in some way geographically separate from it. This corresponds exactly to the region of Caspiane. The Caspians fought as a separate contingent in the army of Darius I (522—486) and, dressed in leather jackets (i. e., the skins of animals), were armed both with scimitars and their own native cane bows²⁵.

As we have noted, Caspiane does not appear to have been included in the Seleucid Empire but it was definitely a part of the kingdom of Atropatene. Strabo tells us it was taken from Media by the Armenians in the time of Artashes (Artaxias) I²⁶ (188—161) but that in his own time (c. A. D. 20) it belonged to Albania²⁷. This acquisition by Albania must have occurred in connection with the fall of the empire of Tigranes the Great (B. C. 66) and any reacquisition by Atropatene would most probably have occurred at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Rhandaia through which the Romans and Parthians temporarily settled the Caucasian question. Pliny (d. A. D. 79) already records the Caspians as a people of Media²⁸, while Ptolemy, a century later, does the same²⁹. Neither of these authors mentions Caspiane as a region but merely the Caspians as a people. The only logical occasion for the transfer of Caspiane back to the Armenian kingdom must have been the reign of Valaršak (Vologaeses) I (180—191) who finally succeeded in establishing a permanent Armenian branch of the Parthian Arsacids upon the Armenian throne. MX makes of Valarsak a mythical first Arsacid King of Armenia and credits him with all sorts of activities whose

¹⁹ Zacharias the Rhetor, *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*, Engl. transl. Hamilton and Brooks (London, 1899), II, vii.

²⁰ Adontz, 171.

²¹ In the following century, the ASX knows of *Ibalakan* or *Ibazkan* as one of the original districts of Albania north of the Kur. Ereman reads *Bazkank'* as the correct form of the ethnicon identifying it with the territorialized tribe (*azgagawar*) of *Bazkank'* or *Bazkan* (also written *Bakank'*, *Bagank'*, and *Baygank'*) but considers *Dašt i Bazkan* the correct form for the toponym. *Dašt i Balasakan* he regards as a corruption based on a confusion between the *Bazgun* north of the Kur and *Balasakan*, the Arab name for the plain around the city of P'aytakaran-Baylakan (Ereman, 42). This confusion may well be real but the connection of the two names with the people called *Bazkank'* or *Balasčik'* is very likely and demonstrates the movement of this tribe from the Caucasus into the plain north of the Kur, then to the Mili plain between the juncture of the Kur and the Arax and, finally, to the plain south of the Arax, where, ultimately, they were absorbed by the local or later population (Adontz, 497, n. 73).

²² Frye, 98.

²³ Herodotus, *The Histories*, LCL, III, 95.

²⁴ Strabo, XIII, 5, 23.

²⁵ Herodotus, VII, 67.

²⁶ Strabo, XI, xiv, 5.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, XI, iv, 5.

²⁸ Pliny, *Natural History*, Loeb Class, Lib., VI, xvii, 45.

²⁹ Ptolemy, *Geography*, ed. Nobbe, VI, ii.

details may be fictitious but which constitute a reorganisation of the kingdom such as one might expect from the real Valaršak who came to the throne after a long period of dynastic instability in Armenia³⁰. In particular, Valaršak is credited with having accomplished much in the organization of the eastern regions of Armenia, Siwnik', and Albania, and mention is made precisely of "villages" taken from the Medes³¹. The fact that Armenia held Caspiane for only a relatively short time, its remoteness from Armenia proper, its long connection with Atropatene, and the unlikelihood of any extensive Armenian settlement so far east, doubtless accounts for the ease with which the region passed out of the sphere of Armenia once and for all in the fourth century. In the pages of Faustus of Buzunda³², Moses of Xoren³³ and Moses of Dasxuran (Kalankatuk)³⁴, we read of how as early as c. 338 A. D., a certain Sanesan or Sanatrak attempted to usurp the Armenain throne and set himself up as an independent ruler in P'aytakaran city. The details of the story vary but Sanatrak is described as a relative of King Trdat (Tiridates) IV of Armenia (298—330) and thus an Arsacid, who was sent into Albania by the king to accompany the youthful St. Grigoris on his mission to convert the Albanians and their neighbors to Christianity. Soon after, Trdat IV died and, when the weak Khosrov (Chosroes) III (330—336, 337—339) came to the throne, Sanatrak, instigated by the Persians, rebelled against the new king and slew St. Grigoris. Setting himself up as anti-king at P'aytakaran, he then invaded Armenia with a vast army composed of Huns and other warriors drawn from a large number of Caucasian mountain tribes. Ultimately Sanatrak was slain in battle and the remnants of his host driven back to "the land of the

Balasčik"³⁵, but separatist tendencies continued to exist in eastern Armenia. After 363 we find the Caspians rebelling against Armenia along with most of her other border subjects, again doubtless with the connivance of Persia³⁶. This revolt was but down by the Armenian commander-in-chief Musel Mamikonian, who brought all of the borderlands back into the fold, sacked the city of P'aytakaran, slew many of its inhabitants, and exacted tribute and hostages from the survivors³⁷. This harsh treatment must have ended any affection the local population may have had for Armenian rule and, at the partition of 387, the Persians transferred Caspiane to Atropatene³⁸ while the city of P'aytakaran and its district, i. e., the part of Caspiane lying north of the Arax, appears to have been ceded to Albania. After this date, the major portion of Caspiane, i. e., the part lying south of the river, ceased to have any connection with Armenian history. In 571 Vahan, Prince of Siwnik' seceded from Armenia and asked King Xosrov of Persia to transfer the *diwan* of Siwnik' from Duin, capital of Armenia, to the city of P'aytakaran and to put this city in the province of Atrpatakan (Atropatene/Azerbaidzan) so that the Siwnians would no longer be known as Armenians. It was at this time, then, that the northernmost district of Caspiane, Hrakot-Perož, with its city of P'ay-

³⁵ K. V. Trever, in her *Očerki po istorii Kavkazskoi Albanii* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1959), pp. 188—197, contains the best analysis of this interesting episode in Armenian history.

³⁶ FB, V, xiv.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, where describing the momentary reconquest of Caspiane, he tells us that the Armenians took vengeance upon the land of the Persians (*Parsk'*) and the city of P'aytakaran, which led Hübschmann (*Ortsnamen*, 268—269) into a lengthy attempt to explain the identity of these *Parsk'*, ultimately concluding that the text must be amended to read *Kasbk'* rather than *Parsk'*. All of this, however, represents an unnecessary reading of more into the text than is actually there. The Armenians, in ravaging P'aytakaran, could easily have made a short incursion into Persian territory which lay so close at hand. There is no reason to believe that FB means to place P'aytakaran in Persia.

³⁸ ASX. ed. Abrahamean, 350.

³⁰ Moses of Xoren, *Patmuti'wn Hayoc'* (Tiflis, 1913), II, iii—vii.

³¹ *Ibid.*, II, viii.

³² FB, VI, vii.

³³ MX, II, iii, vi.

³⁴ Movses Dasxuranc'i (Kalankatuc'i *History of the Caucasian Albanians*, Engl. transl. C. J. F. Dowsett (London, 1961), I, 12.

takaran, became a part of Atropatakan as it is described in the ASX a few decades later, and it is probably at this time that the entire region of Caspiane came to be called P'ay-takaran.

Political and Religious Organization

Despite its size and ethnic character, there does not appear to have been a Prince of the Caspians. No historian mentions such a house and its inclusion in the Throne-List and Military Register, accepted by Adontz as genuine³⁹, has been shown by Toumanoff to be spurious⁴⁰. The Prince of Caspiane cited in this list with his contingent of 3,000 horse in obviously based on the fact that its compiler had seen in Faustus⁴¹ that the Iranian viceroy of Atropatene had raised an army of 3,000 men. Clearly, Caspiane, taken from Atropatene and later returned to it centuries later, has led to Atropatene being taken as the equivalent of Armenian *Kaspk'* when, in reality, *Kaspk'* was only a province of Atropane. Any dynastic house or houses existing among the Caspians must have been suppressed by the pre-Armenian rulers of the region — the Medes, the Persians, or the Kings of Atropatene. We know, moreover, that there was no *vitaxa*, or viceroy, acting as military governor of eastern Armenia as there was along three other sides of the kingdom. There was, in effect, no Albanian March. Now, although Armenia appears to have generally enjoyed excellent relations with the Albanians, there was always, as we have just observed, the very real danger of invasion from this quarter if only from the hordes from beyond the Caucasus, such as the Alans, or from the mountain tribes themselves. How was this region protected? I believe the answer to this question lies in the story of the rebellion of Sanatruk the Arsacid. We know that the royal domains of the kinds of Armenia included extensive holdings in Atropatene⁴² and I am inclined to believe

that, not only was Caspiane included in these, but that they were all administered directly by the monarchy. In the absence of a local dynasty of any significance, what would be more natural for the King of Armenia to do than, following the policy of the Iranian Arsacids, to entrust this region to the command of a member of his own family. Then, given the fact that most of the king's troops were princely levies and there were apparently no princes in Caspiane, what would be again more natural than to levy an army of mercenaries precisely from among the Caucasian mountaineers? When we consider the non-Armenian character of the population of Caspiane, it would hardly be advisable for the Armenians to rely upon troops raised locally among the subject people. This would account first, for how Sanatruk came to have such a large force at his disposal, why these mountain tribesmen were willing to accept his leadership and, finally, why, for such apparent barbarians, they appear to have been so efficiently organized and disciplined. Sanatruk we know had a personal dislike for the new sovereign Xosrov III who we also know was not highly regarded even by the Armenians, while the Persians, hostile as they were to the Christian Arsacids, had probably offered Sanatruk the sovereignty over Caspiane in return for his rebellion and possibly that over Armenia. Sanatruk's apostasy, demonstrated by his murder of St. Grigoris, would have been the *sine qua non* for such a Persian offer.

Nothing is known of the religious organization of Caspiane. It seems logical to expect there to have been a bishop of the city of P'aytakaran with his jurisdiction extending over the entire region but if there was such a dignitary we here know nothing of him. Although there were undoubtedly many Christians in the area, the early passing of this region to Zoroastrian Iran and its subsequent inundation by hordes of Turkic peoples seems to have prevented the Christian faith from having taken firm root there and it must be virtually nonexistent today.

³⁹ Adontz, 451, n. 85.

⁴⁰ Toumanoff, 238, n. 287.

⁴¹ FB, III, xx.

⁴² Adontz, 176.

Subdivisions

The non-Armenian nature of the names of the districts of P'aytakaran early led to the corruption of their orthography in the various mss. of the ASX. The long recension of the text omits P'aytakaran entirely although its inclusion in the list of the lands of Greater Armenia at the beginning of this section of the ASX shows that it was meant to have been included. Relying on the various lists of these districts found in the different mss. of the short recension Hübschmann⁴³ and Eremean⁴⁴ read them as follows:

Hübschmann	Eremean:
Hrak'otperož	Hrak'ot-Perož (Rotəstak)
Vardanakert	Vardanakert
Eut'np'orakean	Ewt'nap'orakean Bagink'
Bagink'	
K'oekean	
Rotibala	
Balanrot	Balanrot (Rot-i-Bala)
Arospižan	Aros Pičan
Hani	Hani
At'li Bagavan	At'si Bagawan
Spandaranperož	Spandaran-Perož
Ormzdperož	Ormizd-Perož
Alevan	Alewan

Hübschmann, as can be seen, restores the list to twelve, whereas Eremean reduces the number of districts to ten. Balanrot is obviously only a duplication of Rot-i-bala under a variant form of the name, while K'oekean, found only in two mss., appears to Eremean to be an erroneous entry for he omits it entirely.

The location of the various districts of P'aytakaran is not certain. Eremean, however, relying on the limited information we possess and the natural geographic divisions of the region (not at all clear in a low-lying area such as this), has attempted, with the aid of a good deal of educated guesswork, to place them geographically and to estimate

their extent. This has been done in the following way:

1. HRAK'OT-PEROŽ. Eremean places this district in the plain called Mili, locating it north of the Arax between the juncture of that river with the Kur⁴⁵. He sees it as the municipal territory of the city of P'aytakaran and identifies it with the district of Rotəstak which the ASX makes a part of Albania. There is reason, however, to doubt that P'aytakaran or its district were actually part of Albania before the Arab period and even then this inclusion of Baylakan in Arran (the Arab name for Albania) may have been purely on geographical rather than on political or even ethnic grounds. In this case, the location of Rotəstak, being an Albanian district, should be sought for elsewhere. The region around P'aytakaran city was earlier known as *Gargarac'uoc' dašt* (the Plain of the Gargarians, an Albanian tribe) and was later, in the Arab period, called *Balasakan dašt* (the Plain of the Balasjians). Cyriacus of Ganja (Kiriakos Ganjakeci) refers to this plain in the thirteenth century under the name *Balamēj*⁴⁶. Eremean gives its area as 3,650 sq. kms⁴⁷.

The exact location of P'aytakaran city itself is not absolutely certain either but Soviet scholars have tentatively identified it with the ruins at the village of Oren-Kala, a site located in the plain between the Kur and the Arax some 300 miles southeast of Tiflis. Excavations, begun here in 1933 and pursued extensively since 1953, have revealed the remains of a rectangular fortified area of some 39 hectares (c. 95 acres). The walls of the city date from the fourth to seventh century A. D. and thus would appear to have been begun during the period of the establishment of Santaruk's power here in 338 and to have been completed under the Sassanids. In the ninth century, however, a rectangular citadel was created within the city by the construction of an adobe rampart strengthened by

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Kirakos Ganjakeci, *Patmut'wn Hayoc'* (Erevan, 1961), XI.

⁴³ Hüb., 351.

⁴⁴ Erem., 117.

semicircular towers. In the twelfth century the outer wall was allowed to fall into ruins and, although the city proper continued to exist, the citadel became the main fortress. The town was destroyed by the Mongols in the early thirteenth century and was never rebuilt. Baths and workshops have been found in the excavations and a considerable amount of pottery. The wealth of the city would appear to have been based on its having lain on a main trade route of the Arab period running from Bārdāa (Partaw) in Utik' to Ardebil in Azerbaidzhan⁴⁸. Arab authors speak eloquently of the city, Ibn-Hauqal describing it as a healthy town, rich in springs, woods, gardens, and fruits⁴⁹. He also places it on a river where mills were located and this Ereman identifies with the lower course of the Gargar⁵⁰. The situation in the arab period is beyond the scope of this study but the route in question, from Bardāa to Ardabil, would undoubtedly have arisen to importance quickly after the founding of Partaw as the new capital of Albania in the time of the Persian Great King Peroz (459—484) and would have utilized in part the older road from Kabalaka to Ardebil. The remoteness of this region from Armenia proper after its loss to Armenian control is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in the pages of TA and later Armenian authors who confuse P'aytakaran city with the Georgian capital Tbilisi (Tiflis)⁵¹!

2. VARDANAKERT. The location of this district is clear from its name which is taken from the town of Vardanakert (Arab.: *Varthan*), which lay just south of the Arax before its juncture with the Kur on the site of the ruins now called *Altan*⁵². Alternative names for this district were the *Vardanean*

or *Vatnean* Plain where St. Grigoris, Apostle of Albania, was slain by Sanatruck Aršakuni early in the fourth century⁵³. The city of Vardanakert lay on the same route from Bardāa (Partaw) to Baylakan (P'aytakaran) and Ardabil, described above; Ibn Hauqal places it seven farsakhs south of the second and twenty-nine north of the last. He refers to it as a larger city than Baylakan both in size and population and states that it was surrounded by a wall and had a special section for the city markets⁵⁴. Ereman makes no attempt to estimate the size of this district but counts it in with Balan'ot (Rot-i-Bala) and Ewt'np'orakean Bagink', for a total of c. 8,900 sq. kms.

3. EWT'NP'ORAKEAN BAGINK'. The "Altars of the Seven Niches"⁵⁵ takes its name from the shrine of the same name, the earlier Gaba'ru Bagink', which appears in Ptolemy as long ago as the second century A. D. as *Σάβαροι Βωμοί* (VI, 2. 1)⁵⁶. This is an obvious corruption of **ἀβαροι Βωμοί*⁵⁷, which Agathangelos refers to an *Ewt'n Bagins mehenic'n* "the Temple of the Seven Niches", a shrine to which King Xosrow of Armenia sent messengers and gifts⁵⁸. In Iran, near the Soviet-Iranian frontier, lies Kabirry Kurgan (Kibirly) which Ereman identifies with this shrine⁵⁹. An important part of Ewt'np'orakean Bagink' was the low lying plain of Mughan, *Movkan dašt* in Armenian⁶⁰, the *Movakani* of Georgian sources⁶¹. This plain lay along both sides of the Kur after it is joined by the Arax and its name in old Georgian is almost synonymous with Albania. The southern half of this plain formed part of Caspiane and was also known as *Gaba'ru dašt*, hence the name *Gaba'ru Bagink'* as

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Man., 164.

⁵⁵ Langlois, *Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l'Arménie*, I (Paris, 1867), p. 117, n. 3.

⁵⁶ Ptol., VI, 2, 1.

⁵⁷ Erem., 46, *Σάβαροι Βωμοί*.

⁵⁸ Agathangelos, I.

⁵⁹ Erem., *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Ibid., 71.

⁶¹ K'art'lis C'xovreba (*The Georgian Annals*), ed. S. Qauxč'išvili I (Tiflis, 1955); Leontius of Ruisi, p. 64 Juanšer Juanšeriani, p. 217.

⁴⁸ A. L. Mongait, *Archiology in the USSR*, Engl. transl. by M. W. Thompson (Baltimore, 1961), p. 230.

⁴⁹ Quoted by H. Manandean, *Trade and Cities of Armenian in Relation to World Trade*, Engl. transl. by Nina Garsoian (Lisbon, 1965), p. 164.

⁵⁰ Erem., map.

⁵¹ E. g., the *Geography of Pseudo-Vardan*, ed. Berberean (Paris, 1960), III, line 100.

⁵² Erem., 83.

another designation for the shrine of *Ewt'np'orakean Bagink'*. Gabaŕu dašt is referred to as the *Gavgaryan* plain by Hamdallah Qazwini in the thirteenth century⁶².

4. BAŁANROT or Rot-i-bala. Eremean regards these al alternate names for the same district and this seems likely since *rot* is the old Persian word for river (mod. Per. *rud*) and both names thus mean (the region of) the Bala River⁶³. The location of this district is clarified by the existence of the *Golgarchai* in the plain of Mughan, a river whose Persian name was *Balh-ab* which would give Bolh-aru, hence Bolgar. The chief place in this district would have been the town of Balan-rot, Persian *Balhab*, now the village of *Bolgaru-kend*.

5. AROS-PIČAN. So far we have been progressing district from northwest to southeast but at this point the enumeration of districts jumps to the south, passing for the moment the two districts geographically located immediately after Bałanrot, and brings us to Aros-Pičan⁶⁴.

Incredibly, despite the wholesale changes in the toponomy of this region once Iranian and now Soviet there is still a village called *Aruss* along the left bank of the *Vilyash-chay* and, located as it is within the natural geographic boundries of Caspiane we can identify the valley of this river as the district of Aros-Pičan. Area c. 675 sq. kms.

6. HANI. The location of this district is a matter of logical guesswork. Neither its name nor its place in the list in the ASX gives us any special reason to place it in the southeast corner of Caspiane in the vicinity of the port of Akstafa as Eremean does⁶⁵. Since the last names in the list do not appear to be in any order, however, and since the coastal region is somewhat detached from the valley of the *Vilyash-chay*, where as we have seen, Aros-Pičan was located, it appears safe to accept Eremeans location of Hani in this area. Adontz⁶⁶ connects this name with that of the

Ainianoi whose presence in nearby Utik' is cited by Strabo⁶⁷. The area of Hani is estimated by Eremean as c. 1,620 sq. kms⁶⁸.

7. ATŠI-BAGAWAN. "Place of the Fire God" can be identified with the region around the modern town of Prishib. Here somewhat to the south of Prishib, itself, may be found the village of Bajarvan, the *Bagarvan* or *Bajarvan* of Arab and Persain authors⁶⁹. Eremean traces this name back to an original **Bagarawan*, whence the *Atši Bagawan* which gave its name to the district. Obviously a shrine connected with the Zoroastrian religion, this site was located near the *Bagarvan* River, now the *Bazar-chai*, which the Armenians and the local Iranian inhabitants, the Talysh, call the *Bagaru*. Only Lewond Erec' mentions this shrine among other Armenian sources, referring to it as *Etši Bagwan*⁷⁰. Eremean estimates the area of the district at c. 2,480 sq. kms.

8. SPANDARAN-PEROŽ. Referred to by LE as *Spater-Perož*⁷¹, the Arab *Sadarasp* or *Satrudan*, this district came to be known as Barzand in the Middle Ages after the city of the same name. The name is obviously connected with the Armenian word *Span-daran* a "place of sacrifices" and suggests the location of yet another shrine. *Pērōz*, or *Pēroč*, is a Persian name (from Avestan **paiti-raočaňh*?)⁷² the exact meaning of which is not known but which was borne by numerous individuals in Middle Eastern history and especially by the Great King Peroz (459—484), who, as fantacal a Mazdaist as his father, may be supposed to have founded or embellished Zoroastrian shrines. Eremean estimates the area of the district as c. 1,275 sq. kms.⁷³

9. ORMIZD-PEROŽ, the Arab *Urm*, corresponds to the present district of Yaft in Iran on the right bank of the middle course of the River Gaŕ-rah (Qareh-su) which flows

⁶² Cited by Eerem., 46.

⁶³ Erem., 43—44.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁶⁵ Erem., 62.

⁶⁶ Adontz, 324.

⁶⁷ Strabo, XI, vii, 1.

⁶⁸ Erem., *ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁷⁰ Lewond Erec', cited by Hübschmann, *Ortsnamen*, p. 351.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (Marburg, 1895), 249—250.

⁷³ Erem., 117.

northwards to the Arax from the Sabalan Mountain near Ardebil⁷⁴. This location cannot be taken as certain. The name Ormizd is derived from Ahura-Mazdāh the Iranian God of Light. (Pehl: *Ōhrmazd*, written *Auhrmzd*, whence Armenian *Ormizd* and Greco-Latin *Hormizdas*), a name borne by no less than five Sassanid Great Kings⁷⁵. The name would seem to imply "Ormizd's Victory" but this is not certain. LE calls it *Ormizd P'eroz*⁷⁶. No town in the district is known. Its area is estimated by Eremean as c. 1,100 sq. kms.⁷⁷

10. ALEWAN. Eremean locates this district along the left bank of the middle and

lower course of the Gaṛ-ṛah River (Qareh-su) extending from the Arax on the north to Mount Yaštasar (Kuh-e-Geyshasar) on the south⁷⁸. The exact line of the western boundary of Alewan from the summit of this mountain to the river is not known exactly but it was the boundary of P'aytakaran/Caspian on the west and separated it from the part of later Vaspurakan that is now called Qaradagh and which Eremean identifies with the ancient Armenian district of Parspatunik⁷⁹. He estimates the area of Alewan at c. 1,300 sq. kms.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁷⁵ Justl, 7.

⁷⁶ Cited by Hübschmann, *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Erem., 117.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, map.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

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